

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-14 are pending in the Office Action, claims 7-13 have been withdrawn from consideration following a Restriction Requirement. Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claim 6 contains allowable subject matter. However, independent claims 1 and 14 are considered to be allowable over the document relied upon in the Office Action.

In the last paragraph on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 3 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. More specifically, claim 3 is objected to on the basis that the “clamping component and the fixed clamping component pressed against opposing sides of the collecting device” is unsupported by the originally filed specification. Claim 14 is objected to on a similar basis with respect to the phrase: “wherein the displaceable and fixed clamping components press different portions of the folded sheet material against opposing sides of the collecting device simultaneously.” These objections are respectfully traversed.

Exemplary embodiments of the present invention are directed to a system for handling folded sheet material. In the exemplary Figure 1A embodiment, a rotatable clamping device 104 is illustrated which includes a linearly displaceable clamping component 106 and a fixed clamping component 108. As described in paragraph [0011] on page 5 of the specification, the rotatable clamping device is configured to simultaneously encompass opposing sides of a collecting device. This paragraph describes that in at least one stage of a sheet delivery operation, clamping components of the rotatable clamping device are positioned such that they exert force against opposing sides of a collecting device (such as collecting device 102) at

the same time. Paragraph [0012] on specification 5 describes that, with respect to the Figure 1G example, rotatable clamping device 104 is arranged such that its displaceable clamping device 106 and its fixed clamping component 108 are positioned on, and are able to press against, different and opposing sides of collecting device 102 at the same time. This paragraph describes that such a feature secures sheet material 124 against opposing sides 126 and 128 of collecting device 102. The clamping function is also shown in the side view of Figure 2, where sheet material 224 is secured on opposite sides of collecting device 202 simultaneously by displaceable clamping component 206 and fixed clamping component 208 of a rotatable clamping device.

Thus, the Examiner's objections to the language of claims 3 and 14 are respectfully traversed, as the specification and drawings clearly describe, in an enabling manner, an exemplary embodiment wherein a rotatable clamping device presses folded sheet material against opposing sides of a collecting device simultaneously, in a manner as illustrated in Figure 1G.

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. The Examiner asserts that it is not clear how the fixed clamping component 108 as disclosed in the specification is fixed.

Not claimed
This objection is respectfully traversed, as the specification is clear that the fixed clamping element 108 is fixed with respect to the rotatable clamping device 104 of Figure 1A. Although the rotatable clamping device 104 may be movable as a unit, the fixed clamping component, as described in the specification, remains fixed within the clamping device 104.

Later, on page 3 of the Office Action, claim 3 is objected to on the basis that "it is not clear how the fixed clamping component 108 presses against opposing sides of the collecting plate...". Again, this objection is respectfully traversed, as the specification makes clear that the rotatable clamping device 104 (which includes a displaceable clamping component 106 and fixed clamping component 108) simultaneously presses against the opposing sides of the clamping device 102, in a manner as illustrated, for example, in Figure 1G and Figure 2.

In light of the foregoing comments, withdrawal of the objections to claims 2 and 3 is requested.

In the last paragraph on page 3 of the Office Action, the drawings are objected to on the basis that the "... clamping component and the fixed clamping component press against opposing sides of the collecting device" must be shown. Again, such a feature is clearly illustrated in, for example, Figures 1G and 2. Thus, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

On page 4 of the Office Action, claims 1-5 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,100,118 (Hobbs et al). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Exemplary embodiments of the present invention include a rotatable clamping device (such as rotatable clamping device 104 of Figure 1G), having a linear displaceable clamping component 106 and a fixed clamping component 108. In the exemplary embodiment discussed with respect to Figure 1G, the displaceable clamping component 106 and the fixed clamping component 108 are positioned on, and able to press against, different and opposing sides of a collecting device 102 simultaneously to secure sheet material against opposing sides 126 and 128 of the

collecting device 102. Such features are broadly encompassed by the independent claims 1 and 14. For example, claim 1 is directed to a system for handling folded sheet material which includes, among other features, a rotatable clamping device having a linearly displaceable clamping component. Claim 1 also recites a collecting device shaped substantially as a saddle, wherein the rotatable clamping device is configured to simultaneously press against opposing sides of the collecting device.

Claim 14 is directed to a system for handling a folded sheet material. Claim 14 recites, among other features, a rotatable clamping device having a linearly displaceable clamping component. Claim 14 also recites displaceable and fixed clamping components which press different portions of folded sheet material against opposing sides of a collecting device simultaneously.

Such features are neither taught nor suggested by the Hobbs patent. The Examiner refers to Figure 3 of the Hobbs patent as disclosing a system for handling folded sheet material having a rotatable clamping device represented, for example, as the transfer assembly 78 or the transfer assembly 88. Referring to the transfer assembly 78, the Examiner asserts that the gripping members 92, 98 constitute a linearly displaceable clamping component. The Examiner asserts that an elongated ridge portion 54 and "pushers" 56 of the transfer assembly 78 constitute the claimed collecting device. The Examiner also asserts that the gripping members 92/98 simultaneously encompass opposing sides of the ridge portion 54. However, neither of the transfer assemblies, as described beginning with column 4, line 64, teach or suggest the presently claimed invention.

For example, none of the gripping members 92/98 of the first transfer assembly 78 constitute linearly displaceable clamping components. To the contrary,

these grippers are attached to cylinder transfer drums 94,96, respectively, and appear to rotate to clamp a sheet, but do not appear to be linearly displaceable. Sheets appear to be held in place on the drums 94 or 98 using what appears to be suction cups within the transfer drums 94, 96 of Figure 3, and no linearly displaceable clamping component is associated with the clamping operation. As such, the Hobbs patent fails to teach or suggest a linearly displaceable clamping component as recited in independent claims 1 and 14 of the present application.

Moreover, the transfer assemblies 78 and 88 in Figure 3 of the Hobbs patent do not appear to press against any portion of the elongated ridge portion 54. Column 5, beginning with line 34 of the Hobbs patent appears to teach away from any such feature by describing that sheets are "dropped onto an elongated ridge portion 60 of the second conveyor 18". Presumably, a similar dropping operation is associated with the ridge portion 54 of the transfer assembly 78. As such, Hobbs teaches away from any rotatable clamping device configured to simultaneously press against opposing sides of a collecting device.

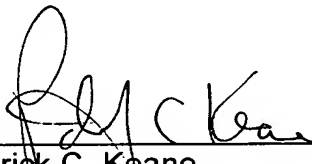
Independent claims 1 and 14 are therefore considered allowable. The remaining claims depend from claim 1, and recite additional advantageous features which further distinguish over the Hobbs patent. As such, all claims are considered allowable.

All objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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